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ABSTRACT

Based on personal narratives, this paper describes Latino children's school experience and suggests home-school collaboration for improving Latino children's education. Latino children begin school as confident, eager, and enthusiastic learners. But well before the third grade, many Latino students begin to experience academic problems and generally are a year or two behind in reading, math, and other areas assessed by the school. It is estimated that some 40 percent of Latino children will drop out before they complete high school. Latino children learn two things from their experiences in school: what happens in school has little relevance to real life and they are losers in the learning game. However, many educational difficulties that Latino children encounter are caused by the widely-held assumption that what is wrong with Latino students is related to their parents, who provide little school preparation to their children. This assumption has created a trend for compensatory early education programs to remove Latino children from the influences of their parents. This practice undermines the relationship between parents and children. Child development centers sponsored by the Foundation Center for Phenomenological Research have been found to effectively serve the children of seasonal and migrant farm workers. These centers' work illustrate that the family culture should be involved in successful education. Parent comments concerning the effectiveness of child development centers are included. (LP)

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LATINO FAMILIES AND THE SCHOOLS

Lily Wong Fillmore

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Latino Families and the Schools

LILY WONG FILLMORE

EACH September, right after Labor Day, thousands of parents, each with a five year old in tow, show up in kindergarten classrooms across the state in an act of supreme trust. These parents have given their children the best preparation for learning that they can provide at home during the first five years of life and now they turn them over to the community to be educated formally. I don't know any parent who does not have high hopes at that moment, as well as some quite appropriate trepidation. How well the children do in school over the next thirteen years will greatly affect the rest of their lives. It may well determine what work they will do as adults, what their economic circumstances will be, what roles they are to play in their communities, how they are going to feel about themselves, and what kind of parents they are going to be someday. So much can go wrong. It might turn out that they have no talent or aptitude for learning, they could align themselves with friends who are a bad influence, or they could get turned off to school by insensitive teachers. Whether the thirteen years the children are in school go smoothly or not is as much a matter of luck as it is anything else. Small wonder that Chinese parents tuck good luck talismans (often food items) in their children's garments when they first send them to school. Parents, for example, sometimes stick a bunch of fresh green onions, a symbol of intellectual promise, tied together with a red string for luck in the child's coat pocket as he leaves for school. If you frisked enough of these kids on the first day of school, you might just shake out enough groceries to make a meal for four.

Over the years, I have experienced the mixed emotions of the first day of school with many Latino parents and their children. These parents typically socialize[1] their children well. Latino children, at five, are responsible, respectful, and mature individuals.[2] They know their strengths and they accept their weaknesses. The children these parents turn over to the school for formal education are confident, eager, and enthusiastic learners. Indeed, they generally do well in kindergarten and they may even do well in the first grade. But somewhere along the line, well before the third grade, many of them get turned off by school and begin to see themselves as losers. By the third grade, a good many are in real academic distress: they are a year or two behind in reading, math, and whatever else the school assesses children in.[3] And things don't get better with time. If the past is any indication of the future, some 40% of the Latino children entering school this year will drop out before they complete high school.[4] The big question for us and, most of all, for the parents who are turning their children over to the schools to educate, is *why*? What turns them off? Why aren't the schools doing a better job educating them?

When these questions are asked of educators, we hear why they should not be blamed. We are told about the many programmatic efforts that have been made over the years to address the special needs of Latino children—compensatory programs, basic skills programs, Head Start, ESL and bilingual education, too. These programs have been designed especially to compensate for *shortcomings in the children* that are said to be the source of their academic deficiencies—in English language skills, in conceptual functioning, in experience, and in the foundational learning skills that are needed for school. These programs have not made a big difference, we are told, because—*the problem is not in the school, it's in the home: the parents have not prepared their children adequately for school; they have not properly motivated their children; they have not provided the support the children need while they are in school because they do not understand or appreciate the need for an education. Why, these parents are not even teaching their children English, which they must know before they can learn anything in school! By speaking with them in Spanish, they handicap the children before they enter school. The only solution, some of these critics have argued, is to get the children out of the home before they are five—away from the influence of the parents, so they can be taught the language and cognitive skills they need for school.*

Three boys from the David Roberti Child Development Center examine a butterfly.

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What they need is a preschool program which compensates for their deficiencies early enough to make a difference.

As an advocate for children and their families, the possibility of this kind of thinking having an influence on public policy and educational programming scares me to death. It is, in fact, already happening across the country. Early childhood education programs that are designed to compensate for putative deficiencies in children's preparation for

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school have been established in many states and children are drawn into such programs at a younger and younger age. The state of Texas, for example, has had a preschool program aimed especially at children from Latino families for several years. The program was originally intended for four year olds, but the state recently expanded it to cover three year olds as well. Congress has been considering a $500 million dollar increase in funding for Project Head Start which will provide programs for many more young children from low-income families throughout the country—many of whom are Latino. Let me tell you why such efforts, especially the ones that are aimed at preschool age children, frighten me. First, the family is *not* the problem. The school is.

What can turn bright and eager learners into dull, disenchanted students in a few short years? Educational programs that treat children as if they were incapable of learning, programs that begin with the assumption that the children's parents are incapable of preparing them for school, programs that regard Latino children as being in need of remediation before they can be taught the things the school is supposed to teach them, that's what!

Look into some typical preschool, kindergarten and first grade classrooms with Latino children[5] and you will see what I mean. Take a look at the children that parents turned over to the schools not so long ago. We see them sitting at tables, hunched over the work assigned by their teachers. In one classroom, the children circle letters that correspond to the initial sounds of labels for objects that are depicted on workpages. They know what they are supposed to do, but they don't know why. In another classroom, they are taught English by their teacher: "This is a pencil; say the word, 'pencil'," she models. "Pencil", they respond in unison. "It is not a pen, say, 'not a pen', everyone!" "Not a pen," the children reply. In yet another classroom, a child sounds out the words on a pre-primer page: "Da mada—" The teacher correct her efforts, "No, no. 'the mother', say 'the mother'." The child is puzzled; that's what she thought she had said. "Da ma-da," she repeats hesitantly. In another class, the children draw lines from one picture showing three objects to the numeral '3' and another line from a picture with one item to the numeral '1'. Again, they do it because their teachers have told them to do so, but the activity has little meaning for them. As the children complete their assigned tasks in these classrooms, they wait for the teacher to tell them what to do next. That's the rule. They wait and wait until they are given their next assignments—more remedial activities that are meant to bring them to the point where they can 'profit' from 'regular' instruction. These activities make no more sense than the previous ones. Still, most of the children work diligently. Some have greater staying power—they don't seem to mind that the work they are asked to do at school makes little sense and they keep plugging along agreeably. Others do mind. They work for a while and then busy themselves with other things, or stare into space. The latter type, I don't need to tell you, will be judged to be less promising students than the former, especially if the latter are Latino children who do not speak English well.

ONCE Latino children who have been judged as poor students get tracked—often as early as the beginning of their first year in school—they are put into low reading and math groups where they get an even larger dose of the same meaningless instruction that turned them off in the first place.[6] Children in the low tracks are given basic skills instruction almost exclusively. They are offered little to no opportunity to discover the purpose for learning those skills, nor are they shown how such skills might be applied in the world outside of school.[7] They learn English through drills on words and sentences that someone *might conceivably* say, but they find it hard to imagine why anyone would need or want to do so. They learn two things from this experience: *what happens in school has little relevance to real life and they are losers in the learning game*. They begin to see themselves as unpromising students and failures in school. In addition, the children are led to believe that the reason they are not good at school has something to do with their parents: their parents didn't teach them English (in fact, many of them don't speak it), they are poor, or they are uneducated. For whatever reason, the problem comes full circle when the children learn enough English to get by—and they inevitably do. They reject the language of the home and many times what their parents have to teach them as well. After awhile, the children forget Spanish, which in many Latino families is the only language the parents speak. When this happens, the parents are cut off from their children. Now they really are unable to provide the support the children need for dealing with school and with life outside of school.[8]

That's the second reason why the idea of creating compensatory programs for children at an even younger age than five scares me. Children are in great enough danger of losing both their self-esteem and confidence in their parents when they are exposed, at age five or six, to the demoralizing experiences I have described. *This is not to say that I am opposed to early education programs for children under five.* What I am arguing against are programs that begin with the terribly wrong-headed assumption that Latino children must be removed from the influence of their parents if they are to amount to anything. I am opposed to programs that assume that there is something wrong with children because they are Latino, because they don't know English, because they are from low-income families, or because they have not had an American mainstream or middle class upbringing.

Over the past several years, I have been trying to identify and describe programs that really would meet the needs of these children. What do they need? I have always believed that Latino children need what *all children* need. They need the kind of programs any of us would want for our own children. But I have had difficulty describing such programs because, in truth, I have not found many programs to which I would have willingly entrusted my own children's early education. In fact, there was no reason to believe that an educational program, no matter how well designed, could provide all of the support the children and their families needed. I wanted programs that build the family's capacity to educate its children, rather than undercut its ability to carry out the educational role that families must play. Latino children need enrichment programs which provide opportunities to explore and understand their physical and social worlds, that allow them to develop their intellectual powers by observing and doing, and to become independent and enthusiastic learners by having successful and satisfying educational experiences. However, in all of my wanderings, I had never seen a program for Latino children that met my standards of excellence for them. Consequently, I could not test my belief that the right kind of program would really make a difference. Was this nothing more than wishful thinking on my part?

THERE are few real, honest-to-god epiphanies in the education business or in life, for that matter. I experienced one a couple of months ago in Winters, California. I visited a child development center located in a Winters public housing project. The Center, which is sponsored by a group called the Foundation Center for Phenomenological Research,[9] serves the children of seasonal and migrant farm workers. The children range in age from two to six. The program is just about the best I have ever seen: it is exactly what I would have chosen for my own children. Indeed, it is the kind of child development program Yuppie couples seek out before they even consider having a child.

The Center provides a rich and full educational program for the children it serves. It also offers low-income families 11-hour child care which includes two hot meals made with organic foods and two nutritious snacks. It has a family health services program that can easily be a model for early education programs throughout the country. Parents and children attend clinics and health education programs that are designed to keep the entire family in good shape and to establish good health as a family affair. The facilities are beautifully designed and maintained. The windows sparkle and floors and walls glow from frequent cleaning and polishing by custodians who are considered members of the educational team. The physical environment is bright and attractive. Paintings and drawings are hung at child-eye-level. They are meant to be seen, touched and enjoyed by the children. The furnishings and fixtures are child-proportioned and oriented. There are plants and flowers in every room and animals in neatly kept cages and containers. There is a garden, planted and maintained by the children.

What I am arguing against are programs that begin with the terribly wrong-headed assumption that Latino children must be removed from the influence of their parents if they are to amount to anything.

On this visit, I see little children working independently at one task or another, spending as much time as they wished at each—ten minutes here, twenty there, thirty minutes even, or for as long as the activity interested them. What is amazing is that children as young as two or three are spending from ten to fifteen minutes working independently on activities that are designed to build their sense of proportion and volume, their understanding of size relations, their coordination and concentration. I watch a tiny child, his lips pursed in concentration, spooning grains of rice from one container to another. Another child pours colored water from a narrow cylindrical container to a wider one. She is working on conservation of volume, I think to myself. She spills a drop of water on the tray holding the two containers. She takes a tiny sponge and fastidiously tidies up the tray. She finishes the activity and heads for the snack table where the children can help themselves to juice and cheese sandwiches that are laid out on serving trays. She pours a glass of juice for herself from a tiny

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pitcher. She notices that she has spilled a drop on the snack table; she gets a sponge and cleans it up. She is just a tad over two years old.

In another room, a four year old works on quantification and the decimal system. He has a cloth spread out on the floor. It is marked off in rows and columns. In the left-most column he has arranged sequentially a set of ten cards that are printed with single digits—1, 2, 3, 4, etc. In the next column he has laid out cards for the tens series—10, 20, 30, 40, etc. Cards in the hundreds are laid out in the next, and in thousands in the right-most column. The child goes to the shelf where beads and strings of beads are stored. He gathers an assortment of single beads, strings of ten, and flats of hundreds on a tray and returns to the cloth. He picks up a handful of single beads and counts out the number of beads corresponding to each of the numerals on the cards that are set out in the first column. He places one bead beside the numeral '1', two beads beside '2', three beads beside '3', etc. He then moves over to the next column, taking care not to disturb the beads he has laid out already. He takes and counts out the ten-bead strings. He lays one beside '10', two beside the '20'. Then he counts out three strings and places them beside '30', etc.

I leave him and walk around to see what other children are doing. A child is looking at a book which is written in Spanish. I watch her and listen. She's actually sounding out the words on the page. She's barely five years old. I walk over to the rug near the bird cages where a cluster of five children are gathered around a basket containing a dead baby bird that was found that morning at the Center's entrance. It had apparently fallen out of its nest in the eaves above the doorway. The children have a magnifying glass and are carefully examining the dead bird. "How did it die?" they wonder. They look at its head which is red. "Maybe they shot it in the head," one of them speculates. They turn it over gently, inspecting its head and then its little dead feet. They turn it over again to see what its hind end looks like. The children talk to one another as they examine it from beak to bottom. The birds in the cages behind them chirp in a lively background chorus. A child relates what the teacher told her about how she thought the bird had died. It might have fallen out of the nest, she reports, or it could have flown into the building. They have a picture book of birds which a teacher had placed near the basket. One of the children flips through the book and finds a picture of a bird that resembles the dead one in the basket. "See," she says knowledgeably, pointing at the bird's head. "That's not blood. The head is *supposed* to be red."

I return to the boy who is working with the beads and numbers. He is now lugging blocks of beads to the spread, each block consisting of a thousand beads. He counts them out as he stacks them alongside the numbers on the last column. "Four thousand: one two, three, four. Five thousand: one, two, three, four, five. Six thousand: one two, three...," etc. He has been working on this all by himself for at least 20 minutes. A teacher has stopped by to watch. She smiles encouragingly at him from time to time, but she neither tells him what to do nor does she urge him to keep at it. She apparently gave him the instruction and guidance needed for this activity at an earlier time. He finishes at last. Now he stands back to survey his accomplishment. Hands on his hips and smiling, he nods in satisfaction. Then he begins to disassemble the display and puts the beads, cards and blocks away. This child at age four knows the difference between 9 and 90, between 900 and 9000. He has also discovered the sense of accomplishment that comes from completing a demanding task and has experienced the pleasure that comes from doing it well. The children inspecting and discussing the dead bird have learned something about life and death, about the powers of observation, and about the use of books as reference materials.

The teachers are cultural and linguistic bridges connecting the worlds of the home and the classroom; they facilitate the children's entry to school.

Was this program a miracle? How was it achieved? The teachers at this center are mostly women from the same background as the parents of the children in the center. The lead teacher had just one year of formal schooling before joining the staff of the Winters Child Development Center. After eight years on the job, she is a highly skilled professional educator.[10] That's the genius of this program. Antonia López and Marilyn Prosser, co-directors of the Foundation Center which operates this center and 17 others like it under contract from the state's Department of Education, have developed a sophisticated and rich training program that offers talented individuals the formal education they need for teaching young children. This includes preparation for the GED examination, training in Montessori methods which leads to a teaching credential from the American Montessori Society,[11] as well as courses leading to Associate of Arts degrees granted by a community college. Many of these women do not speak English, so the training program is in Spanish. Since the children in the Winters Child Development Center and many of the Foundation's other centers come from Spanish-speaking families, it works out just right. The teachers help the children develop their thinking skills, their understanding of the world around them, and their conceptual framework for interpreting their experiences in language that enables them to share these experiences with their families. The teachers are cultural and

linguistic bridges connecting the worlds of the home and the classroom; they facilitate the children's entry to school by building on what the children have learned in their homes. The family is drawn into the life and work of the Center rather than dismissed as irrelevant.

SINCE that day, I have visited three other centers to prove to myself that the Winters program was not just a fluke. I visited the Foundation's urban Compton-Lynwood Child Development Center in Compton, California, which serves the children of low-income African-American families. The experience I had in Winters was repeated in Compton. There, I listen and watch as a young man, Emile Wilson, a Rhodes Scholar with a Ph.D. in political science from Oxford, reads a rousing story to a group of mesmerized kids and a mom. Subtly, he models for the parent some techniques for involving children in the world of literacy. She hangs onto his words, as do the children. I consider the important role Dr. Wilson, an African-American, plays in the lives of these children. In addition to providing professional support for the Center staff, he also serves as a positive male role model for the children, many of whom come from single-parent homes. In another area, I watch children lost in concentration as they work on math problems. Several are working on addition and subtraction of numbers such as 168 and 336, using beads and blocks to represent the values they are manipulating. I marvel at the fact that these children appear to be no older than four or five. Others have long strings of beads stretched out on rugs. They are working out intervals of three, five, and seven on their beaded chains. They count, "*one, two, three; one, two, three...*," placing little pointers along the chain to mark the intervals as they count them out: three, six, nine, twelve, and so forth. Their teachers are ever-present, but they neither direct nor interfere as the children explore and discover the relationships and concepts they are working on. The teachers offer a judicious bit of instruction now and then when help is needed, but otherwise they encourage the children to learn through an engagement with the materials at hand as well as through exploration and observation.

I then visit the Foundation's First Unitarian Child Development Center which is located in a downtown Los Angeles neighborhood where many refugee families from El Salvador live. The teachers here, as in all of the Foundation's Centers, are highly professional: they are some of the most competent teachers I have ever observed. Several mothers and grandmothers are present at the Center during my visit. They listen to the children reading the stories they have written, and they beam with pride as the teachers comment on the progress their children have made in school. Many of the children at this Center are reading and writing, although the teachers do not rush them into such activities. The children are given many opportunities to discover what is involved in literacy but no formal reading instruction per se. They begin to read and write when they feel ready to do so. At that point, the teachers offer them the assistance they need to develop their skills and to make sense of texts.

This Center contrasts sharply with two other preschool program classrooms that are located next door. At the Center, we see a rich and inviting array of learning materials. There are map puzzles to take apart and put together again, globes that enable the children to discover how flat maps relate to three dimensional representations of the earth, science and math materials to manipulate, pre-reading and reading materials to explore, animals in cages to observe and to care for, and gardening gear for the children to use in the flower beds that they have planted around the premises. In the neighboring program's classrooms, we see several primary tables, each with six chairs arranged around it, ready to accommodate the children when they arrive at school the next day. There are a couple of easels in each classroom, and the usual collection of large and even larger kindergarten building blocks stacked against a wall. The children's phonics and arithmetic workpapers are displayed on bulletin boards along with some of their artwork. There is little in these classrooms that invites children to learn through exploration or to learn independently, as we find in the Center's classrooms.

I visit one other Center in midtown Los Angeles. The bright and beautifully tended school grounds give the

The children are given many opportunities to discover what is involved in literacy. They begin to read and write when they feel ready to do so.

appearance of an oasis in the tough inner-city neighborhood where the Center is located. This one is so gorgeous that when I first saw it, I thought I had died and gone to the big schoolhouse in the sky. The David Roberti Child Development Center—named after a state legislator who has long promoted the kind of child development programs all children deserve—is the best early education facility I have ever seen. It is located in a spanking new building which was constructed according to the Foundation's design. Again, I see children working at a variety of learning activities inside and out. Children act out in dramatic play the *Sturm und Drang* of make-believe worlds and lives as they play with baby-dolls and wheel toys. In tiny garden plots all around the building, the children work diligently, pulling a weed here, prop-

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ping up a flower there, all without prompting or nagging. I watch as children tend their neat little rows of begonias and green beans. These children are having fun, but they are also learning first-hand about the miracle of plant propagation, life and growth. Other children work at the sand and water tables. They have a great time digging, measuring, piling, patting, pouring and squishing *and* they are also learning about quantity, balance and form. The Center's bright and sensitive teachers watch keenly as the children work at their self-selected activities; they provide guidance and instruction unobtrusively, but only when needed or requested. The instructional model they follow is congruent with the child socialization models that are followed in the children's homes. The teachers give the children the same loving support they get at home as they help them develop the skills and concepts they will need for school. The children at the David Roberti Center are confident and competent learners. You see it in their posture and in their demeanor. They don't need to be told they are capable; they *know* it. They can handle anything.

A CHILD drops a glass; it shatters on the floor. Without a word, she walks over to the housekeeping corner and comes back to the scene with a child-sized broom and dustpan. She sweeps the tiny shards into a pile. She positions the dustpan just so and sweeps the pile into it. She empties the dustpan into the trash can. Then she goes over the floor again, this time carefully sweeping the areas under the table. She gets down low, looking at the floor at an angle to see if there are any slivers of glass that she may have missed. Satisfied that there are none, she empties the dustpan once more and returns it and the broom to their storage place. A teacher has observed all of this, but she has not taken over, nor has she made a fuss. The teacher played her part in this educational drama by not interceding, by allowing the child to discover what she could do. The child—no older than five—has dealt with the problem independently, competently and responsibly. The children coming out of the Foundation Center's programs are like that. They leave the Centers at age five or six, fully prepared to deal with whatever they are likely to encounter in school. In fact, many of these children have been judged to be 'gifted' after they leave the Center. From what I saw, they certainly are.

Here then is the kind of program that Latino children, indeed all children, need. It is a program that begins with the assumption that children and their parents want and deserve the best education that can be provided. But good education such as I have described must be very costly, you must be thinking.

I too was a bit worried that this program was too good to be true. It had to be terribly expensive. It could never be replicated on a wide scale, I thought. This turned out to be the biggest surprise of all. While the not-so-hot-programs that one finds across the country cost around $23 per child per day for a three and a half hour program, the programs run by the Foundation Center operate on just $19 per child per day for an 11-hour a day program, including two hot meals and two snacks.[12] I still can't figure it out, but there you are.

Do these parents really care about the education of their children? You bet they do, if the Latino parents I have encountered over the years are any indication of this group.

In this discussion of Latino families and the schools, I have argued that much of the educational difficulties that Latino children encounter in school are caused by the wrong-headed but nonetheless widely-held assumption that what is wrong with Latino children are their parents. Among Latinos as among other groups, there are families that have become, for one reason or another, dysfunctional. Such families do indeed have difficulty preparing their children for school and for life. But they are *exceptions* rather than the rule. Most Latino families do what families should for their children. They teach them ways of learning from their experiences, strategies for getting and using information, notions about what's worth learning and what's not, and beliefs and expectations about themselves as learners. Most of all, Latino parents inculcate in their children a profound respect for teachers and for school.

So what happens when these children get to school and discover that what they have learned from their parents has little relevance or validity there? What happens when they discover in their contact with teachers and administrators that the language and culture they have acquired at home have no value or use at school? What happens when their needs and feelings are disregarded? They respond in the ways self-respecting people do. Some fight back but many simply back off, rejecting the world of school which seems to have so little relevance to their real lives.

And how about the parents? What do parents think when they see their eager offspring getting turned off to school in just a few years? Unfortunately, the blame-the-victim ploy that we educators have used to absolve ourselves of responsibility for not doing a better job has worked all too well.[13] Many Latino parents have come to doubt their own ability to offer their children the where-

withal for doing better in school rather than question why the schools are not doing a better job educating their children. These parents deserve far better than that. They have a right to expect the society's schools to educate their children without undercutting their confidence in themselves and in their parents. They also have a right to assume that the society's educational policies will not work against the family's ability to support and educate its own children. Do these parents really care about the education of their children? You bet they do, if the Latino parents I have encountered over the years are any indication of this group.

THE father of one of the children at the David Roberti Child Development Center, José Luis Romero, had this to say when parents were asked what message they would like me to pass on to educators and policy makers about meeting the educational needs of their children:

"I thank God for having found a program that teaches both the parent and the child so much...you can see the difference when these children leave this program and enter elementary school. They are very different from those children who have attended regular (pre)school and have not had the opportunities that are offered in this program. It would be great if the program could be extended into upper grades and that more programs like this could be offered for others."

A mother from the First Unitarian Center, a refugee from El Salvador, responded to my question with tears in her eyes. She said that she was very grateful that her child was becoming a competent and independent learner, but she felt guilty knowing that there are other children just like hers who can't get into the program because there is no room. She knows that her daughter is especially fortunate to be at the Center and wishes that all children could get as good an education as her own child is getting.

I do too. ■

Parent Comments from the David Roberti Child Development Center

Translated from Spanish by A. López

"Had I found a program such as this for my eldest child, he would not be as far behind in school as he is now. The form of education and the nutrition system is excellent. Every day my children surprise me with what they have learned." Rosa E. Venegas

"It is very important to us as parents to be able to count on services such as these...the service is very complete. They teach us our responsibilities as parents and the children also learn." Diana Beristain

"I am very satisfied with the program. It offers all of the opportunities in the area of development, nutrition and skills." Teresa Zamora

"The best thing that could have happened to us is having found this program. The developmental program is very excellent...the nutrition as well. The parents are able to leave their children here fully confident that they are in good hands. I expect that the program will continue to improve and hope that there will be more of these programs for others." Francisco Barahona

Parent Comments from the Compton-Lynwood Child Development Center

"My daughter was here when she was 2, and she came back when she was 4. I was very pleased with the education she received, and I'm still pleased with it because my daughter learned a lot. I see that Christopher is taking a little longer, but each child is different. But he's learning." Devetheure Fields

"Tisa's been here 2 years. I'd say that they have a very good program and I like the curriculum the way it's run. I like the teachers. They care about the children. They don't seem like they're just pushing them along—(that) it's just a paycheck. I like the way (the children) are fed; I like the fact they are actually concerned about their physical condition, their health. The whole thing they do give a lot of feedback." Evelyn Brown

"Well fantastic! Fantastic! Lord, I thank you." Vanessa Reveter

"He's 2 and 10 months; he'll be 3 in June. He can count 1 to 10. He can sing some songs. I can't remember it, but he be singing." Sherlon Means

"I had 2 grandsons here and that's how I became familiar with the school. And I think it's very nice. I wish I'd brought my other children here. I think your school is just great." Juan's and Carlos' Grandmother.

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NOTES

[1] The term "socialize" relates to "socialization," the process by which parents and other caretakers inculcate in young children the cultural beliefs, behaviors and practices that are important to the family and the cultural community of which the family is a member. Cultural anthropologists who have studied socialization find that it can differ substantially in content and means across groups.

[2] Guadalupe Valdés, 1986. Brothers and sisters: A closer look at the development of "cooperative" social orientations in Mexican-American children:. Paper presented at the 37th Annual Convention of the California Association of School Psychologists, Oakland, CA.

[3] Katie Haycock and Susana Navarro, 1988. *Unfinished business: Fulfilling our children's promise.* Oakland, CA: The Achievement Council.; M. Beatriz Arias, 1986. The context of education for Hispanic students: An overview. *American Journal of Education*, 95, 677-679.

[4] L. Steinberg, P.L. Blinde, and K. Chan, 1982. Dropping out among minority youth. *Review of Educational Research*, 54 (1), 113-132.

[5] It is interesting that there is little of the curricular and methodological differentiation you would expect to find among programs serving minority group children at the preschool, kindergarten and first grade levels. In setting up preschool remedial programs, the tendency has been to adopt with little modification the teaching methods and practices of elementary school remedial programs. Needless to say, such methods and practices are quite inappropriate and ineffective for children of this age.

[6] Jeannie Oakes, 1985. *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

[7] Aaron Cicourel and Hugh Mehan, 1983. Universal development, stratifying practices and status attainment. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 4, 3-27.

[8] Lily Wong Fillmore, in press. Language and cultural issues in early education. In S. L. Kagan, Ed. *The Care and Education of America's Young Children: Obstacles and Opportunities*, The 90th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education.

[9] I am grateful to Jim Cummins for calling the Foundation Center's programs to my attention. It's funny that Jim, a Canadian, would be telling me, a Californian, about a program in my own backyard—but that's life! The administrative office of the Foundation Center's Montessori Child Development Centers is located at 1011 22nd Street, Sacramento, CA, 95816.

[10] All Center staff members, including center directors, teachers, teaching assistants, home-care providers, cooks and custodians, receive three weeks of intensive training in child development and program management each year. There is also continuous on-the-job support from fellow teachers who are further along in the training program.

[11] The "Montessori method" is more frequently found in private school programs for the children of affluent families than in public school programs for the children of low-income families, although it was originally developed to address the educational needs of poor children.

[12] I am told that it is only by paring administrative costs to a bare-bones scale that the costs are kept at this level. The Foundation Center folks apparently have their priorities right since there was no evidence of programmatic skimping.

[13] Jim Cummins, 1988. *Empowering Minority Students*. Sacramento, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

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